

## INTRODUCTION

Let me begin with a tough question. Brothers and sisters: have you wondered why you believe the Bible to be true? For example, like some of the basic doctrines – there is one true God, Jesus Christ became a man, and there will be an end to our world when Jesus returns, etc. Some of you may say: I believe whatever our pastor and Bible study leaders teach me. That is good, but it is not the best answer. Other Christians may respond: The Bible is true because I believe it to be so. Well, people who practice other religions also firmly believe their doctrines are true. I can believe with all of my heart that I still have the strength and body of a 25-year-old, I have a full head of hair, 6-pack and 30-inch waist. The reality is that I am already a few decades behind! However, something true will always stay true regardless of what my belief is. There is a country called United States before I came here. There was a singer named Elvis Presley from Memphis before I was born. Those are undeniable facts whether I believe or not. However, many of our seeker friends cannot apply the same principle to Christianity. They criticize that the Bible was only written by men and it is full of fairy tales. Some people deny the Christian truths because they only believe in themselves. They also think that since we can fly rockets into space and study an atom under a microscope men's wisdom can solve any problem. Can it? The apostle Paul wrote his letters to the Corinthian church to challenge his readers. There were many smarty-pant believers in Corinth. Paul explained to them the Christian truth was contrary to their rational mind because it was beyond their logical thinking. Even to us, God's wisdom is so rich and transcending that it surprises and humbles us.

## EXPLANATION

### 1. God's Wisdom in His Salvation 神拯救的智慧

First, Paul talked about God's wisdom in His salvation plan. He said in **verse 18**: For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. Before we know Christ, we might think that God saved us through the death of Jesus Christ is a dumb way. Who would be willing to nail His own son to the cross? The recipients of Paul's letters saw such salvation plan as silly too. Paul explained in **verses 22-23**: 22 Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles. To the Jews, miracle was a solid proof of God's power. However, many of the Jews rejected Jesus even when they saw Him healed the sick and cast out demons. The Savior they had expected was a mighty warrior to overthrow the Romans. How could their commander die on a cross? Based on the Old Testament, those who were hanged on a cross were cursed by God! Therefore, the whole salvation plan was a huge stumbling block to their faith. Whereas, to the Greeks the message of the cross was plain foolish. In the Greek philosophy humans are made up of the body and the soul. The body is weak and perishable, while the soul is superior and eternal. Therefore, it was unthinkable for God, a spiritual being, to take on a fragile body to become a human. Jesus even died voluntarily on a cross, which was an execution tool reserved for the worst criminals. What people considered to be nonsense actually shows God's wisdom. Remember the time when

Jesus' disciples rebuked people for bringing their kids to the Lord to ask for His blessing? Jesus was mad at the disciples. He told them in [Mark 10:14-15](#) 14 ...“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 15 I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” God is delighted to see us accept the truth with a child-like faith. God gives us a brain to know Him. But ultimately, we have to submit our finite mind to God. Using what we can understand as a foundation, then we step out in faith. When we share the gospel with seeker friends we welcome their tough questions. We should not say to them: “Don’t ask any question, just believe.” Don’t use commonsense in your answers, but dig into the Bible. I am sure your faith will be strengthened in the process. Also, it is true that topics like sins and eternal judgment are offensive to most. Should we avoid those subjects? Paul’s answer was straightforward: “we preach Christ crucified.” Let us say it together “we preach Christ crucified.” Nowadays while we can share the gospel more effectively with technology we must not change the gospel content. There are some star-preachers whose messages even non-believers love to hear. They talk about science, love and purpose of life. But there was no mentioning of sins, the cross or commitment to follow Christ. I could not help but scratch my head, wondering what those people believed in when they raised their hands or walked down the aisle to express their willingness to accept Christ. Some people might think: “It is a free ticket to get to heaven with no string attached, why not?” That is not the full gospel! It costs us nothing to accept Christ, but we should prepare to sacrifice everything to follow Him. We should not be afraid that we will scare people away when we preach the crucified Christ. He died for our sins. He rose to give us new life, and He called us to follow Him. Yes, we are friendly and our church has good food. But Christ should be the main attraction! Seeker friends decide to stay because we share God’s truth without reservation.

## 2. God’s Wisdom in His Election 神揀選的智慧

God’s wisdom is so rich and transcending that it surprises and humbles us. God showed us His wisdom in salvation. God also displayed wisdom in His election. By “election” it refers to the action through which God decided whom He planned to save. How did God choose? Paul told us in [verse 26](#): Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. God did not use the criteria that we see as favorable for His election. By saying so, Paul did not mean that none of the rich and famous will be saved. Then he added in the next two verses that God deliberately chose the foolish, weak, lowly and despised things in the world. In [verse 29](#), Paul told us that the effect of God’s election is: so that no one may boast before him. God does not choose to save a person because he/she has any “good” quality the society admires. Likewise, God does not reject a person because he/she is considered “bad” by the world’s standard. Therefore, there is nothing we can take pride in ourselves. It is completely His mercy and grace. No matter who we are, one thing we have in common is that we are all born-sinners. Paul quoted one of the Psalms when he said in [Romans 3:10-11](#) that 10...There is no one righteous, not even one; 11 there is no one who understands; no one who seeks God. We are on the same boat. There is nothing inside us that makes us deserved of God’s grace. Jesus saved us when we were still sinners. In fact, God had chosen whom He decided to save long time ago. Paul made that clear in [Ephesians 1:4-5](#) that 4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will. God made the decision even before the world existed. It was accomplished by

His will for His purpose. Salvation is a matter of choice. Not ours but God's. I said it before and this will not be the last time I say this: if the truth of God's election cannot humble us, nothing will. Someone said that believers will have three surprises when they get to heaven. There are people whom they think should be there but will be absent, there are also people whom they think are not qualified but will be present, and the biggest surprise is that God admits them into eternity. Many non-believers reject the Christian faith because they think that it is a gospel for the losers. For instance, it is people who suffer from terminal illness, dumped by their boyfriend or girlfriend, or for orphans and the homeless. Most of us do not belong to any of those categories. But the fact is, the more we realize that we are so undeserved of God's love, the more we will appreciate His grace. When my older son was still small, once I purchased a video game console as a birthday gift for him. He could never imagine that his stingy dad would buy such an expensive present. I hid it in the closet waiting for the right time to give it to him. For some reasons there was a period of time when he was quite rebellious. I was very frustrated. Then a thought came to my mind. That was the perfect time to give away the gift. In his little mind, when he was convinced that he deserved a good spanking more than anything, but instead he was rewarded. That was grace! Brothers and sisters: you will never be thankful for God's grace if you think that you are saved because you are better than others. Salvation is not putting a pretty dress on a cute baby girl. She looks charming even in a diaper. Salvation is restoring a rusty car from a junkyard by giving it new paint, replacing all the accessories and installing a new engine. It gives a new life to a dead machine. Once we were dead in spirit. In Christ, we have a new life.

## CONCLUSION

God's wisdom is so rich and transcending that it surprises and humbles us. The message of the cross makes no sense to us. But it is God's truth even when we cannot fully comprehend it. As Christians, we should always appreciate God's wisdom. It is just like Paul marveled in **Romans 11:33** - Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! Brothers and sisters: we are called to take the gospel to those who do not know Christ. We tell it as it is, and let the Holy Spirit change people's mind. To the seeker friends among us, my encouragement for you is that you should keep searching and asking. Do not reject what you do not understand just yet. Ask God to shed light into your heart and lead you to the truth. The message of the cross is contrary to our human thinking. This world defines power by one's look, wealth, influence and connection. But our Lord Jesus came in the form of a servant, poor and weak. He suffered and He was humiliated. But He rose from the dead. He received all the glory and honor He deserved. His name be praised forever!